IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 5 and 6 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein.

Please amend Claims 1-4, 8-11, 13, 14, and 16-19 and add new Claims 20-22 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus <u>for process image data in which additional information is embedded,</u> comprising:

input means for inputting image data showing an original image;

compressing means for compressing ~~at least a part of said image data~~ <u>the image data at a position where the additional information is embedded to form compression data</u>; and

<u>first</u> embedding means for embedding <u>the</u> compression data obtained by said compressing means into ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data ~~so that it is difficult to be identified by the human eyes by converting a part of said image data~~.

2. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data is constructed by a plurality of bit planes and ~~said~~ <u>the first</u> embedding means ~~exchanges said~~ <u>embeds the</u> compression data to a lower bit plane.

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising second embedding means for ~~converting a part different from said part of said image data in accordance with predetermined information, thereby embedding said predetermined information into said~~

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image data embedding the additional information into the image data at a position different from the position where the additional information is originally embedded.

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein ~~said~~ the image data is constructed by a plurality of bit planes and said second embedding means ~~exchanges said predetermined information to an upper bit plane, thereby embedding said predetermined information so that it can be identified by the human eyes~~ embeds the additional information to an upper bit plane.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said image data comprises color components of RGB.

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for processing image data in which additional information is embedded, comprising:

an input step of inputting the image data representing an original image;

a compressing step of compressing ~~at least a part of said image data~~ the image data at a position where the additional information is embedded to form compression data; and

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[[an]] a first embedding step of embedding the compression data obtained in ~~said~~ the

compressing step into ~~said~~ the image data ~~so that it is difficult to be identified by the human eyes~~

~~by converting a part of said image data~~.


9. (Currently Amended) A storage medium which stores an image processing program so

that it can be read out by a computer, wherein said program processes image data in which

additional information is embedded and comprises:

an input step of inputting the image data showing an original image;

a compressing step of compressing ~~at least a part of said image data~~ the image data at a

position where the additional information is embedded to form compression data; and

[[an]] a first embedding step of embedding the compression data obtained in ~~said~~ the

compressing step into ~~said~~ the image data ~~so that it is difficult to be identified by the human eyes~~

~~by converting a part of said image data~~.


10. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

compression means for compressing image data, wherein the image data compressed by

said compression means includes at least data at a second predetermined bit position;

first embedding means for embedding ~~data, as an invisible watermark, showing a result of~~

~~the compression in~~ the data compressed by the ~~said~~ compressing means to a first predetermined

bit position of ~~said~~ the image data; and

second embedding means for embedding ~~a visible watermark~~ additional information to

[[a]] the second predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ the image data.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 10, ~~wherein information showing said first predetermined bit position of said image data in which the data is embedded by said first embedding means is key information~~ further comprising holding means for holding information representing the first predetermined bit position, as key information.

12. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the compression by said compressing means is a reversible compression.

13. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

compressing means for compressing image data, wherein the image data compressed by said compression means includes at least data at a second predetermined bit position;

encrypting means for encrypting data showing a result of the compression in said compressing means;

first embedding means for embedding the ~~data, as an invisible watermark, encrypted~~ data compressed by ~~said~~ the encrypting means to a first predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ the image data; and

second embedding means for embedding ~~a visible watermark~~ additional information to [[a]] the second predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ the image data.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 13, ~~wherein information showing said first predetermined bit position of said image data in which the data is embedded by~~

~~said first embedding means is key information~~ <u>further comprising holding means for holding</u>

<u>information representing the first predetermined bit position, as key information</u>.


15. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the compression by said

compressing means is a reversible compression.


16. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

a compressing step of compressing image data<u>, wherein the image data compressed by said</u>

<u>compressing step includes at least data at a second predetermined bit position</u>;

a first embedding step of embedding ~~data, as an invisible watermark, showing a result of~~

~~the compression in said~~ <u>the data compressed by the</u> compressing step to a first predetermined bit

position of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data; and

a second embedding step of embedding ~~a visible watermark~~ <u>additional information</u> to [[a]]

<u>the</u> second predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data.


17. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

a compressing step of compressing image data<u>, wherein the image data compressed by said</u>

<u>compressing step includes at least data at a second predetermined bit position</u>;

an encrypting step of encrypting data showing a result of the compression in said

compressing step;

a first embedding step of embedding the ~~data, as an invisible watermark, encrypted in said~~ <u>the data compressed by the</u> encrypting step to a first predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data; and

a second embedding step of embedding ~~a visible watermark~~ <u>additional information</u> to [[a]] <u>the</u> second predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for executing an image processing method, wherein said method comprises:

a compressing step of compressing image data<u>, wherein the image data compressed by said compressing step includes at least data at a second predetermined bit position</u>;

a first embedding step of embedding ~~data, as an invisible watermark, showing a result of the compression in said~~ <u>the data compressed by the</u> compressing step to a first predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data; and

a second embedding step of embedding ~~a visible watermark~~ <u>additional information</u> to [[a]] <u>the</u> second predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> image data.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for executing an image processing method, wherein said method comprises:

a compressing step of compressing image data<u>, wherein the image data compressed by said compressing step includes at least data at a second predetermined bit position</u>;

an encrypting step of encrypting data showing a result of the compression in said compressing step;

a first embedding step of embedding the ~~data, as an invisible watermark, encrypted in said~~ the data compressed by the encrypting step to a first predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ the image data; and

a second embedding step of embedding ~~a visible watermark~~ additional information to [[a]] the second predetermined bit position of ~~said~~ the image data.

20. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the compression by the compressing means is reversible compression.

21. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first embedding means embeds the data as an invisible watermark.

22. (New) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the first embedding means embeds the data as an invisible watermark, and the second embedding means embeds the additional information as a visible watermark.